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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANTANANARIVO 000123

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/22/2014  
TAGS: [MA](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#)  
SUBJECT: MADAGASCAR: NOW FOR THE HARD PART

REF: ANTAN 113 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador Niels Marquardt for reasons 1.4 d and e

11. (C) Summary/Action Request: Saturday's welcome meeting between Ravalomanana and "TGV" provides the first light at the end of the tunnel since this crisis became deadly one month ago. The truly heavy lifting starts now, as Ravalomanana will have to accept a difficult and personally unpleasant transition from Madagascar's unquestioned top dog to a figurehead presiding over a transition to a very uncertain future for himself. The need for a dedicated UN Envoy to guide this process -- and especially to keep Ravalomanana on track -- is greater than ever, so I appreciate everything the Department and USUN is doing to support the UNSYG in naming and dispatching one here as soon as possible. End Summary/Action Request.

12. (C) Saturday's welcome meeting under FFKM Church Council auspices between President Ravalomanana and ex-Mayor Andry "TGV" Rajoelina came just as hope was evaporating for any dialogue. Key chiefs of mission, meeting late on Friday afternoon, were unanimous in their assessments that dialogue was dead, as the President's conditions and TGV's actions remained entirely incompatible. (Predictions then were for a clash of simultaneous TGV and TIM rallies on Saturday, a TGV-led march on the Presidential Palace at Iavaloha, or another attempt to take ministries -- all with potentially disastrous consequences.) Leaving that meeting, I phoned TGV and then National Assembly President Sylla (Ravalomanana's lead negotiator) to press them both one last time to agree to meet. I was particularly harsh on the President's side, telling Sylla that, in my opinion, failure to meet would mean that the President did not want to do so, as it was entirely within his power to make the meeting happen if he really wanted to. I said this was the last moment for the President to show decisive leadership, or else be held responsible for whatever followed. Sylla was taken aback by my bluntness but said he respected my opinion.

13. (C) The Saturday meeting -- on-again, off-again until it finally occurred early in the afternoon -- was short on substance but full of significance, just for having taken place. The FFKM Communiqué issued afterwards basically declared a truce between the two camps to allow further dialogue and negotiation to occur: no more rallies, intimidation, provocative statements, speeches, etc. while the dialogue continues. Ravalomanana and TGV are expected to meet again today to start discussing transition arrangements, on the basis of a draft document negotiated last week between Sylla's and TGV's teams (draft text provided last week to AF/E). Ravalomanana in particular will have difficulty swallowing his much-diminished role under the agreement, while TGV, for his part, may find it hard to sell anything less than Ravalomanana's immediate resignation to his most extreme supporters. In any case, the local mood is now quite hopeful, on the basis of the initial encounter and the

promise of more dialogue.

¶4. (C) The need for a dedicated, high-level UN Envoy is now greater than ever. We understand that UNSYG Ban is considering a list of candidates, reportedly including Kofi Annan, to come pick up the work started two weeks ago by A/UNSYG Haile Menkerios. I feel strongly that sending such a senior envoy remains necessary, especially to keep the famously mercurial Ravalomanana from backtracking on or wiggling out of the process now finally joined. The envoy needs to be a world figure who can demand access to Ravalomanana at any moment, and not be subject to his periodic disappearances at critical moments. As the UN is already engaged, sticking with them makes sense -- and USG influence would remain strongest with a UN envoy.

¶5. (C) There may be initiatives from either the AU or SADC (or France), but none of which would have the clout and impartiality that the UN already enjoys here. I understand in particular that Senegalese President Wade, allegedly on invitation from "la Francophonie" (and perhaps supported by the AU), may be willing to engage as mediator here. As his engagement necessarily would be periodic and limited, I consider it a distinctly less attractive option than that of a senior UN Envoy. Indeed, Wade engaged here in 2002 and is remembered best for two agreements -- "Dakar I" and "Dakar II" -- which Ravalomanana never implemented. Preferring the UN, few here want to see what "Dakar III" might look like.

MARQUARDT